Deepkin

A 5e Player Race by DM Tuz

DM Tuz

Deepkin

"Tell me more about that 'sky' you keep speaking of..."

The underground of the world harbors a unique world of its own. Deep beneath the surface lies a strange yet fantastic realm, shrouded in darkness, danger, and mystery. This vast, cavernous world hosts many creatures that appear entirely alien to the surface and is home to unique folk, whom the people of the overground collectively refer to as the deepkin.

The deepkin are a collective of different sentient races, each with their own designated territories and distinct cultures. They have existed for centuries, if not millennia, beneath the surface, and their history is as rich and diverse as the collective history of the surface. And yet most of their history is unknown to the people of the surface, as are the events of the surface's past familiar to the deepkin themselves. In this time, a true parallel world has developed independently from the surface, until they eventually met.

Both surface folk and deepkin were naturally inclined to seek out more of the material world's offerings, as is typical of mortal races driven by curiosity. Races who were drawn to excavating the riches from the earth and those who made their homes in caverns soon discovered of this vast world that lied beneath their feet. Deepkin, on the other hand, were further exploring their labyrinthine homes to expand their domains, and they too eventually learned of another world that existed far above the underground's cavernous ceilings. And at the intersection of these two worlds the inhabitants of the surface and the depths met. Unfortunately, most of these first encounters were defined by suspicion, fear, and even violence because of how foreign one seemed to the other.

Relations between the deepkin and the people of the surface have faced an uphill battle ever since, but slowly and surely, the efforts of both sides for mutual acceptance are bearing fruit. An increasing number of deepkin and their varied people are ascending to the surface in quest of adventure and understanding.

Choker
Artwork by Alexandre P. Halah

Check out these other Player Races!
Aside from the Dolls, I also have created plenty of other Monster Girl inspired player races, such as the Dolls and the Centaur!

Deepkin Traits

As a Deepkin, you possess innate traits and capabilities.

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 2 and increase a different one by 1, or increase three different ability scores by 1.

Creature Type. Your creature type is humanoid

Size. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, and another language of your choice.

Aberrant. You can read, speak, and write Deep Speech and you have advantage on saving throws against effects and spells that specifically target humanoid creatures.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Subraces. Choose one of the following subraces: Choker, Burrower, Lurker, and Mind Render.

Lurker
Artwork by
Alexandre P. Halah

Choker

Chokers, who refer to themselves as "San'kai", are among the more commonly found deepkin who inhabit the underdark. Originally, as most of the deepkin, they were labeled as fearsome and sadistic ambush predators, but with growing understanding, people of the surface learned more about their complex and nuanced nature and unique world views.

Chokers are just short of human size, featuring rubbery skin that ranges in color from desaturated greens to grey blues to tan. Their most distinctive characteristic is their flexible arms, which end in dextrous finger-like appendages and are capable of snatching and grappling with incredible strength. These tendril-like arms are able to perform delicate and precise movements, making Chokers not only excellent climbers but also skilled users of tools. Their mobility and dexterity allowed the Chokers to spread far and wide among the cavernous expanses and form settlements far out of reach of other deepkin.

Similar to their cavern homes, which are commonly clearly divided into set areas, Chokers have a tendency to compartmentalize all aspects of themselves. To an outsider, this may appear offputting, as a Choker apparently may adapt an entirely new personality depending on the situation but also appear to quickly process events and suddenly switch from one emotion to another. To a Choker, this serves to establish internal harmony, and to embrace and express their own multifaceted and flexible selves in all situations as they deem appropriate. For example, a Choker may enjoy some leisurely banter with companions one moment to then snap into a cold and calculating aspect of themselves as they just perceived an incoming threat—to the Choker, though this change was an appropriate one from 'friend' to 'hunter'.

Boneless. You can move through and occupy a space as narrow as 5 inches wide without squeezing, unless you wear medium or heavy armor.

Tentacles. Your arms are composed of a pair of tentacles which effectively function like a pair of arms, including fingers and opposable thumbs. Your tentacles grant you a climbing speed equal to your movement speed and can be used to make unarmed strikes. Your tentacles have the reach property, and when you use them to make unarmed strikes and hit with them, they deal 1d4 + your Strength modifier bludgeoning damage.

Whenever you hit a target with your tentacles, you can choose to not deal damage and grapple the target instead.

Stretchy Limbs. When you wield a melee weapon that does not have the heavy property, your reach with that weapon is increased by 5 ft. Additionally, any spell you cast with the range of touch has its reach increased by 5 ft.

Delinquent. You are proficient in Athletics or Stealth.

Burrower

Their dwelling was in the lower reaches of the underdark, where the burrowers, who identify as the "Ch'tchmak," lived. As dependable strongarms and mercenaries, they frequently work in tandem with other deepkin.

Burrowers have a broad physique that verges on monstrous and typically stand one or two heads taller than the average human. These humanoids show many traits that appear insectoid at first glance, such as an exoskeleton, antennae, and mandibles, indicating a kinship with the Entomos of the surface. But upon closer inspection, these traits have been discovered to be fascimiles and must have evolved independently in convergence. Separating further from the Entomos are their sprouting fur and their unique four eyes, two large and two small, that perfectly adapt them to their dark underground environment. The most outstanding trait, though, that distinguishes them from the other deepkin and allows them to succeed in their cavernous homes are their sturdy claws. These appendages are able to cleave and burrow through sturdy rock, earning them their surface moniker and making them both natural warriors and miners.

Unique to the burrower's mindset among the deepkin is their system of morals. Contrary to most cultures, their entire moral fabric is composed of the opposing concepts of truth and falsehood, from which most of their worldview stems. As such, burrowers equate even small lies with loathsome acts and are willing to forgive malicious transgressions under the right circumstances if the perpetrator is upfront about them. From this unique and unassuming moral compass comes a complex set of rules that burrowers seek to uphold and apply to members of other species. Thankfully, this makes dealing with burrowers simple and direct, albeit tedious at times, for other inhabitats of the depths.

Carapass. As long as you don't wear heavy armor, you have a +1 bonus to your AC.

Claws. You can use your claws to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, the strike deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike. Additionally, your claws grant you a burrowing speed equal to half of your movement speed.

Lesser Tremor Sense. As long as you are fully submerged in dirt, earth, soil, or similar ground, you have a tremorsense of 30 feet, allowing you to sense vibrations in the ground and pinpoint the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within range.

Powerful Build. You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

Survivalist. You are proficient in Athletics or Survival.

Burrower
Artwork by Alexandre P. Halah

Mark of the Darklurker
Artwork by Kero Kero Dan

Lurker

Lurkers, unlike other deepkin, are more like occurrences in the underdark rather than a true species. Their exact origin is unknown, and the lurkers do not appear to be particularly interested in discovering it. Theoretical accounts from the other deepkin range from lurkers being the result of nethermancy gone wild to higher beings purposefully creating them. Regardless, Lurkers exist and have successfully coexisted with the other deepkin of the underground, particularly among choker communities.

Lurkers are thin and lanky humanoids wearing a large black cloak that contrasts sharply with their otherwise pale complexion. However, upon closer inspection, one will discover that their signature cloak is essentially a skin flap that covers the majority of their back and head. The base of a lurker's spine elongates, acting as a connection point for their skin flap, and ends in a prehensile tail. Their faces appear gaunt, with flat noses and piercing red eyes, adding to their uncanny appearance.

Their innate power over nethermancy, which allows them to easily create lesser phantasms and skillfully use them to avoid detection. As the name implies, lurkers are reclusive creatures who try to avoid attention as much as possible. They prefer to operate discreetly, in the shadows, and alone. Despite their reclusive nature, lurkers frequently get involved in the affairs of others.

Lurkers are notorious meddlers of the underdark. Within their minds, there appears to be little distinction between other people's business and their own, and, from the shadows, nothing escapes their prying eye. Thus, lurkers get involved in situations without being asked and usually succeed without anyone knowing. These situations are typically comprised of misgivings perceived by the lurker, who regard themselves as arbiters of their own brand of justice within their homes.

Fortunately for the deepkin, the majority of these interferences are beneficial, leading many of them to value the presence of lurkers in their communities. On the other hand, this may make interpersonal relationships with lurkers difficult at times, as their unique mentality allows them to easily cross or outright ignore boundaries.

Glide. You have a fly speed of 30 feet, but whenever you fly using this trait, you can't increase your altitude. Additionally, whenever you fall, and are able to spread your arms, you can use a reaction to immediately fly and stop your fall.

Tail. You can use your tail to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, the strike deals 1d4 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier piercing damage instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Phantasms. You know the *Minor Illusion* cantrip and the *Mirror Image* spell and can cast both without material components. You can cast the *Mirror Image* spell without expending a spell slot, and once you do so you must finish a long rest before you can do so again.

When you choose this subrace, you choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Nimble. You are proficient in Acrobatics or Stealth.

Mind Render

Perhaps the most alien among the deepkin are the Mind Rippers, who call themselves the Cere'ley.

Standing about as tall as a human, the Mind Rippers' thin frame is clad in a glistening membrane that ranges in color between deep purples and midnight blues. Their head, the mind ripper's most distinguishing feature, resembles that of a squid, featuring protruding tendacles and three pale eyes. Each of their long and spindly extremities eventually splits into numerous tendrils, which are adept at both strength and dexterity.

As best one can describe these enigmatic beings, Mind Rippers are both intense and calculating in their demeanor. They tackle any issue at hand with a cold calculus and have little understanding of sentimental matters. Nonetheless, they are accepting of the emotional needs of other species, although commonly under a veneer of derogation.

In the depths of the underground Mind Rippers commonly live secluded from the other deepkin in their own societies, making them exceedingly rare to encounter.

Tentacles. You can use your tentacles to make unarmed strikes. When you attack with your tentacles, you can choose to add your Constitution modifier, instead of your Strength modifier, to the attack and damage rolls. They deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

Whenever you hit a target with your tentacles and your target is your Size or smaller, you can choose to not deal damage and grapple the target with your tentacles instead.

Mind Rend. As an action, you can force a creature within 60 ft. of yourself to make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 2d6 psychic damage and has disadvantage on the next Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw it makes before the end of your next turn. When a creature that fails its saving throw while grappled by your tentacles, you additionally regain an amount of hit points equal to the psychic damage dealt. The DC is equal to 8 + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus. You choose which Ability modifier you use for the DC when you choose this subrace.

You can use this action a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before you have to finish a long rest.

Psionics. You know the *Mage Hand* cantrip. Once you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *Detect Thoughts* spell once. Once you reach 5th level, you can also cast the *Levitate* spell once. You must finish a long rest to cast these spells again with this trait.

When you choose this subrace, you choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Esoteric. You are proficient in Arcane or Insight.

Mind Render
Artwork by Alexandre P. Halah

Deepkin Unique Feats

Deepkin characters have access to unique feats when they level up in a class. Some DMs allow the use of feats to further customize a character, see chapter 6, "Customization Options", of the Player's Handbook.

The following special feats allow your character to expand upon their innate abilities, as each feat represents an evolution of your character's nature and traits.

Darklurker's Mark

Prerequisite: Lurker Deepkin

You deepen your connection to the innate nethermancy in your blood. The darkness that gave birth to your kind in the ancient past now shelters you like a loving mother. From its embrace, you are now able to unleash an otherworldly moan that breaks the spirits of your foes. You gain the following bonus:

- Increase one of your Ability scores by 1.
- As long as you are in dim light or darkness, speaking does not cause you to reveal yourself if you are hiding and you can project your voice from any point within 60 ft. of you that is also in dim light or darkness.
- As an action you can let out a terrifying scream. Each creature within 20 ft. of you that can hear you must succeed a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened by you until the end of your next turn. A creature frightened this way can't use reactions. The DC is equal to 8 + your Constitution or Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect on it ends, it becomes immune to your terrifying scream for 24 hours. If you use this action while in dim light or darkness, you can choose to project your scream in a 30 ft. cone instead.

Grand Synapse's mark

Prerequisite: Mind Render Deepkin

The Grand Synapse, the collective consciousness that lies at the center of your kind's civilization, has deemed you worthy and allows you to deepen your connection with it. Now your psionic capabilities not only excel over the ones of your kin, but with each mind you rend, you become enervated. You gain the following bonus:

- Increase one of your Ability scores by 1.
  - You can now telepathically communicate with any creature within 60 ft. of yourself.
  - Whenever you use your Mind Rend trait and a target succeeds its saving throw, you do not expend the use of your trait. Additionally, whenever a creature fails its saving throw against your Mind Rend, you gain advantage on the next ability check or attack roll you make within the next minute.

Lyncher's Mark

Prerequisite: Choker Deepkin

Ancient tales speak of the first of your kind, whose grace and speed were unrivaled within your underground homes. You have deepened your bond with your ancient progeny, and now you find yourself able to tap into your ancestors' aberrant quickness. You gain the following bonus:

- Increase one of your Ability scores by 1.
- Moving through other creature's spaces does not cost you extra movement.
- You can now invoke the aberrant quickness innate to your unique body structure. You can use a bonus action to make a single weapon attack, cast a cantrip that does not deal damage, or to dash. You can use this bonus action an amount of times equal to your proficiency modifier before you have to finish a long rest to use it again.

Umber Hulk's Mark

Prerequisite: Burrower Deepkin

While prolonged eye contact with a burrower may cause a slight feeling of disorientation, it was said that a mere glance at one of your progenitors was enough to send a man into raving lunacy. As you have deepened the connection with your ancient blood, you too are now able to inflict mental strain on anyone whose eyes meet yours. You gain the following bonus:

- Increase one of your Ability scores by 1.
- You gain the Befuddling Gaze racial trait.

  Befuddling Gaze. As an action, you can emanate a befuddling gaze in a 30 ft. cone. Each creature in the area that can see you (excluding creatures that only perceive you via blindsight or tremorsense) must succeed a Charisma saving throw or become dazed until the end of your next turn. A dazed creature can't use reactions and reduces any ability checks and attack rolls by 1d6. The DC is equal to 8 + your Constitution or Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus. You can use your gaze an amount of times equal to your proficiency modifier before you have to finish a Long Rest to use it again. Instead of using an action, you can also use a bonus action to use your gaze. If you do so, you target only a single creature within 30 ft. of you (same restrictions apply).

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